

What is involved with pursuing Cataract Surgery for my pet?

Evaluation:

We will first evaluate your pet for other eye diseases and make sure that cataract surgery is appropriate. If it is determined that your pet is a good candidate, cataract surgery can be scheduled

Surgery:

The day of cataract surgery, we will perform two additional tests (an Electroretinogram and Ocular Ultrasound). If these tests are normal, then surgery is performed. The patient is here all day, usually arriving before 10am and going home at the end of the day. *The exact discharge time varies dependent on the pet's post operative parameters.*

Rechecks:

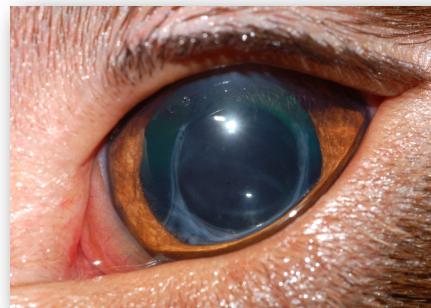
The recheck schedule varies with each patient but is typically 1 days, 1 week, 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 10 weeks, 16 weeks, and 8 months post surgery. Most patient need the pressure in their eyes checked at 2-3 days and 10-12 days post surgery as well.

Care at Home:

Most pet's require 3 times a day medications for the first few weeks, with a slow decrease in frequency of medications (predominately eye drops) over 3 months. BUT, the needs of every patient are different and post operative care is variable. The post operative eye drops are critical to the success of the surgery. Some patients require eye drops indefinitely to maintain good vision, but this is not common. No bathing, swimming, or rough play for 2 weeks.



Complete cataract



Eye after cataract surgery

Please contact us for more information or to schedule an appointment for your pet for cataract evaluation.

Contact one of our offices for up to date pricing for cataract surgery.

Rechecks are **NOT INCLUDED** and typically cost between **\$400 - \$500** over 6 months. But the actual cost of surgery and the rechecks can vary depending on your pet's required care.



Cataracts and Cataract Surgery

Cary • NC

6426 Tryon Rd (next to Lowes)
919-319-3348
cary@aecassociates.com

Wake Forest • NC

1608 Heritage Commerce Ct
suite 150
919-319-3348
cary@aecassociates.com

What is a Cataract?

A cataract is when the normally clear lens inside the eye becomes cloudy. The cloudiness blurs vision, like a progressive fog. There are 3 main causes of cataracts:

- **Age.** The lens grows and becomes denser with age in all animals. This causes the lens to become bluer and eventually whiter, often starting around 10 years of age. Vision however is not significantly impaired in most pets until around 13 years of age.

- **Genetics/Inherited.** This is the MOST COMMON cause of cataracts in pets. Inherited cataracts often occur anywhere from the first few months of life to 10 years of age. In younger dogs, inherited cataracts can progress rapidly over only a few weeks. The lens grows and becomes denser with age in all animals. This causes the lens to become bluer and eventually whiter, often starting around 10 years of age. Vision however is not significantly impaired in most pets until around 13 years of age.

- **Diabetes Mellitus.** Dogs with diabetes mellitus store glucose byproducts in their lens which can rapidly cause a cataract to form. This type of cataract can occasionally cause severe inflammation in the eye requiring rapid removal to avoid permanent vision loss.

How are Cataracts treated?

Restoration of vision in pets with cataracts involves the exact same procedure as in humans. In fact, human instrumentation and equipment is used to remove cataracts in pets. The cloudy cataract is removed using an instrument called a phacoemulsifier. A plastic replacement lens is then inserted back into the eye to restore normal focus. The main difference between cataract surgery in humans and in dogs is that dogs require general anesthesia to perform the procedure where as most humans can have the procedure with heavy sedation. In addition, the success rate in dogs for restoring near normal vision is lower than in humans. Vision after cataract surgery is near normal, but most pets are slightly far sighted. This means that objects up close are fuzzy. Pets essentially need reading glasses after cataract surgery.



Clear view from a normal eye.



Same view through an advanced cataract.

Success Rate:

The potential for near normal vision after cataract surgery in cats is nearly 99%, similar to humans.

The potential for near normal vision in dogs is **LOWER** than cats or humans, and is around **92% - 95%**. Dogs are more apt to develop chronic inflammation in the eye after surgery that can lead to excessive scar tissue, glaucoma, and retinal detachments. These complications can lead to poor vision or **NO VISION** and can occur days to years after surgery. For this reason, we often do not pursue surgery until a cataract has caused marked loss of vision.

Frequent evaluations and administration of medications as directed helps minimize the potential for complications.

Risks:

While one of the safest surgeries performed in pets, there are risks with cataract surgery.

General anesthesia. Modern anesthesia techniques makes the potential for anesthesia problems, even in older pets, quite low. But there is always some risk, even the risk of death, when humans or pets require anesthesia.

Poor to No vision. Unfortunately, not all pet's regain vision after cataract surgery and some pets even lose vision after cataract surgery.

Chronic Medications. A small percentage of pet's require long term medications to maintain good vision after cataract surgery.